



Deaf Awareness at Highlands School

What does it mean to be deaf?

- Deafness can mean different things to different people
- The general term 'deaf people' can be used to describe people with any degree of deafness
- There can be different degrees or levels of deafness
- All deaf people experience barriers when it comes to accessing communication

Different levels of deafness

Mildly deaf

People may find it difficult to follow speech in noisy situations

Moderately deaf

People may need to use hearing aids

Severely deaf

People will usually need hearing aids and may rely on lip reading or sign language to communicate. Sign language may be the person's preferred method of communication

Profoundly deaf

Sign language may be the person's preferred method of communication

Some people are deaf from birth

Facts and figures

Around 2 million people in the UK have hearing aids - about 800,000 are severely or profoundly deaf

1 in 6 people in the UK are affected by different types and levels of deafness

Some people may go deaf due to an illness

Some people lose their hearing as they get older



How do deaf people communicate?

People who are deaf can communicate in many different ways such as using:

- Behind-the-ear and bone anchored hearing aids, assisted listening devices such as radio aids and cochlear implants
- Sign language, fingerspelling
- Lip reading
- Facial expressions, gestures and body language
- Written language, e.g. email, text, letter

Top communication tips

Deaf awareness: Face me when you talk, make sure I know what you are talking about, involve me in the conversation.



Get the deaf person's attention. Try waving, tapping their shoulder or creating a vibration



Use your hands. Point at what you are talking about



Speak clearly. Not too slowly or too loudly



Act or mime



Make sure they can see your mouth. Face them when you talk



Keep trying. Try texting on your phone or writing a message down



Sign language

- Sign language is used by some deaf people as a way of communicating with others
- It is a visual language which uses hand shapes and movements, gestures, facial expressions and body language
- Hearing people also use sign language to communicate with their deaf friends or family members

Did you know that...

- Sign language is different all over the world, in the same way that spoken languages are
- Sign language is a proper language like any other. The only difference is you use your hands instead of your voice
- Learning sign language will not stop you learning speech

Some more facts you should know

- Deaf people can't hear everything with their hearing aids or cochlear implants; some sounds might still be difficult for them to hear
- Lip-reading can be really difficult and it's easy to miss information
- With the right communication support, deaf children can learn alongside hearing children
- Deaf people do not have an intellectual disability but may struggle to understand due to their language difficulties